

UNITED STATES COMMISSIONERS AND MAGISTRATE JUDGES: AN INTRODUCTION

In 1793, Congress authorized the federal circuit courts to appoint discreet persons learned in the law to set bail in federal criminal cases. The appointees were formally named commissioners in 1817, by which time they could also take affidavits and conduct depositions in civil cases. In 1842, Congress authorized the commissioners to issue arrest warrants and hold persons over for trial. Over the years, their duties continued to grow to include, among other things, resolution of seamen's wage disputes, conduct of extradition hearings, enforcement of the internal revenue laws, and issuance of process to enforce the 1866 Civil Rights Act.

In 1896, Congress changed the title of the position to United States Commissioner. The United States Commissioners were appointed for a four-year term, but were subject to removal by the district court at any time. United States Commissioners received fees pursuant to a schedule which was not adjusted until 1946. Despite this, some United States Commissioners earned two to three times the salary of a district judge during prohibition. This eventually led to the institution of a fixed salary in 1946.

In 1968, Congress enacted the Federal Magistrates Act. The Act abolished the office of United States Commissioner and created the office of United States Magistrate. By July 1, 1971, the new magistrate system had totally replaced the former commissioner system.

The Federal Magistrate Act of 1979 greatly expanded the authority of magistrates to include the conduct of civil and criminal misdemeanor trials. The 1979 legislation also created a system for the merit selection of magistrates.

Thereafter, pursuant to the Civil Justice Reform Act of 1990, the title of the office was changed to United States Magistrate Judge.



225th Anniversary
1789-2014

Southern District of New York

9/12/2014

Former United States Magistrate Judges

Name	Location	Type	EOD	SEP	US Com
Garrity, John B.	Poughkeepsie	PT	05/17/71	05/16/87	1957-71
Raby, Harold J.	New York City	FT	05/17/71	09/26/85	
Jacobs, Martin D.	New York City	FT	05/17/71	05/16/79	
Schreiber, Sol	New York City	FT	05/17/71	10/31/78	
Goettel, Gerard L.	New York City	FT	05/17/71	04/07/76	
Potter, Gregory J.	New York City	FT	05/17/71	10/31/72	
Hartenstine, Charles J. Jr.	New York City	FT	05/16/73	07/19/76	
Bernikow, Leonard	New York City	FT	12/01/75	11/02/98	
Gershon, Nina	New York City	FT	08/03/76	07/31/96	
Sinclair, Kent Jr.	New York City	FT	12/30/76	09/01/83	
Tyler, Joel J.	White Plains	FT	08/06/79	05/01/91	
Washington, Ruth V.	New York City	FT	08/06/79	10/03/87	
Buchwald, Naomi R.	New York City	FT	04/03/80	09/23/99	
Grubin, Sharon E.	New York City	FT	03/01/84	02/29/00	
Dolinger, Michael H.	New York City	FT	03/12/84	03/31/14	
Roberts, Kathleen A.	New York City	FT	11/05/85	04/14/95	
Lee, Barbara A.	New York City	FT	02/04/88	02/03/96	
Fox, Mark D.	Newburgh	PT	05/31/88	09/02/91	
Katz, Theodore H.	New York City	FT	06/06/91	06/01/12	
Fox, Mark D.	White Plains	FT	09/03/91	08/05/08	
Eaton, Douglas F.	New York City	FT	01/22/96	02/28/10	
Yanthis, George A.	White Plains	FT	06/27/97	10/31/13	

Current United States Magistrate Judges

Name	Location	Type	EOD	ECA
Francis, IV, James C.	New York City	F/T	10/28/85	10/27/17
Goldberg, Martin R.	Middletown	P/T	03/13/92	03/12/16
Ellis, Ronald L.	New York City	F/T	11/16/93	11/15/17
Peck, Andrew J.	New York City	F/T	02/27/95	02/26/19
Smith, Lisa Margaret	White Plains	F/T	03/20/95	03/19/19
Pitman, Henry B.	New York City	F/T	07/08/96	07/07/20
Fox, Kevin Nathaniel	New York City	F/T	10/02/97	10/01/21
Maas, Frank S.	New York City	F/T	06/01/99	05/31/15
Freeman, Debra C.	New York City	F/T	03/02/01	03/01/17
Gorenstein, Gabriel W.	New York City	F/T	03/02/01	03/01/17
Davison, Paul E.	White Plains	F/T	01/05/09	01/04/17
Cott, James L.	New York City	F/T	03/02/10	03/01/18
Netburn, Sarah	New York City	F/T	08/16/12	08/15/20
McCarthy, Judith C.	White Plains	F/T	04/14/14	04/13/22

KEY:

EOD: Entry on Duty date

SEP: Separation date

ECA: Expiration of Current Appointment date